UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/53/552
S/1998/1010
28 October 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

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Letter dated 27 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the joint declaration made by the Heads of Government of the Countries of South-Eastern Europe at their meeting held at Antalya, Turkey, on 12 and 13 October 1998 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33, 36, 41, 64, 91 (a), 93 (d), 94 (a), 101, 110, 149, and 155, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Volkan VURAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Joint Declaration made by the Heads of Government of the Countries of South-Eastern Europe at the summit meeting held at Antalya, Turkey on 12 and 13 October 1998

We, the Heads of Government of the countries of South-Eastern Europe - Mr. Momir Bulatović, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Mr. Ivan Kostov, Mr. Costas Simitis, Mr. Radu Vasile and Mr. Mesut Yilmaz - have met at Antalya on 12 and 13 October 1998. Present at the meeting were the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of South Eastern Europe - Mr. Ismail Cem, Mr. Blagoi Handziski, Mr. Zivadin Jovanović, Mrs. Nadezha Mihailova, Mr. Paskal Milo, Mr. Theodoros Pangalos and Mr. Andrei Pleşu.

Mr. Ivo Sanader and Mr. Besim Spahic participated in the meeting as observers.

At this second summit meeting of the countries of South-Eastern Europe, we have reviewed the world political and economic situation, the developments affecting stability and security in our region, the progress of our cooperation at various levels since our first meeting in Crete, including the implementation of the conclusions reached in the meetings of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

As we approach the end of this century, we stress our common will to open a chapter of peace, understanding, economic welfare, prosperity and cooperation in the history of our region for the benefit of our peoples and of the whole of Europe. We are conscious that this can be achieved only by means of strengthening our good-neighbourly relations, promoting democratic values, the rule of law, human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, solidarity and cooperation. To this end, we firmly support further development of our mutual relations in all fields on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis.

Meetings held at various levels on the good-neighbourly relations, stability, security and cooperation process in South-Eastern Europe contribute to the establishment of a comprehensive framework for multilateral cooperation originating within the region. We reiterate our full support for further development of this framework through concrete measures and schemes and welcome the decisions taken by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs on institutional aspects to increase efficiency and to streamline various projects, proposals and ideas.

We consider the meetings of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs as significant and timely steps in the development of this process, particularly in the wake of the historic developments which ended political and ideological divisions. Ministerial and expert meetings to conduct consultations on political and security issues and promote cooperation in areas ranging from economic development and environmental questions to the human dimension, cultural exchanges, youth, reforms, combating terrorism and organized crime are

all endeavours to respond to challenges to peace, stability and security in our region.

Various initiatives in the field of defence and security cooperation were noted, including the meeting of the ministers of defence of the countries participating in the SEDM process held at Skopje on 26 September 1998 as well as the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of a Multinational Peace Force of South-Eastern Europe.

We do not ignore the existence of serious challenges to regional stability, including tensions, divergences and even crises. Our political will and determination for cooperation, supported by our peoples, are most valuable assets to respond to such challenges. Our success in creating a more favourable political and economic environment will also facilitate the timely integration of all the countries of the region in the European and international community.

We strongly emphasize, therefore, the importance of the countries of South-Eastern Europe addressing regional issues jointly. We appreciate the openness and frankness of the participants during the discussions as well as their efforts and contributions to facilitating solutions.

We discussed together the serious situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We reaffirmed our support for Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998) and 1199 (1998) and we called on all parties for their implementation in full in order to avoid further aggravation of the crisis. We underlined the necessity of the immediate cessation of violence and of starting urgently a constructive dialogue, without preconditions, for finding negotiated political solutions based on granting a large measure of autonomy and self-government for Kosovo within the internationally recognized borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity we all support, and on the full protection of the rights of all inhabitants, citizens, national minorities and ethnic communities on a basis of equality, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Principles and the standards of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

We emphasized the need for creating all necessary conditions in Kosovo for the refugees and displaced persons to return freely and safely to their homes. We particularly underlined the importance of improving the humanitarian situation with the engagement of international humanitarian organizations, and reiterated our support for the efforts of the international community to that end.

During our consultations we were informed that a breakthrough had been achieved in the talks between the representatives of the international community and the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia concerning the full and verifiable implementation of Security Council resolution 1199 (1998) with the support and assistance of international organizations.

We express our deep satisfaction with this new development and with the understanding reached. We strongly support its full implementation so as to bring lasting peace and stability to the region.

We attach great importance to the political, economic and social stability of Albania. We have followed with great concern the recent developments which occurred in that country. We welcome the formation of a new government as a precondition for further steps for establishing public order and developing a constructive dialogue among all political forces in Albania within the framework of democratic institutions. In this context, we welcome the formation of the "Friends of Albania" group within the framework of OSCE, co-chaired by the European Union, to coordinate the efforts to stimulate and assist the process of stabilization and economic recovery. We will continue, bilaterally and through this group, our support and assistance to Albania.

We also discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is another test case for Europe.

We noted with pleasure that the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 12 and 13 September 1998 were held in a peaceful atmosphere. We expressed our sincere hope that its results would be a further step towards the development of a pluralistic democracy in that country and we called on the newly elected political and constitutional bodies to cooperate in good faith to ensure the efficient functioning of common institutions and the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

We reiterated our strong support for the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, in order to consolidate a State of two entities and three constituent peoples.

We jointly state that the European orientation of the countries of South-Eastern Europe is an integral part of their objectives for political, economic and social development.

It is our firm belief that Europe cannot be complete without the countries of South-Eastern Europe, without our peoples, who represent civilizations and cultures which have traditionally contributed to the formation of a contemporary European identity.

On the eve of the approaching millennium, we welcome the intensified efforts to wider European integration and emphasize the importance of including the countries of the region in the processes of deepening and broadening European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

Our endeavours to promote regional cooperation are in broad congruence with the aspirations of the countries of the region to increase integration with Europe.

We consider that the existing mutual relationships with other regional cooperation schemes are complementary in nature and that they enrich the fruitful network of cooperative structures for reaching common objectives.

One of the meaningful instruments for developing good-neighbourly relations is the encouragement of cooperation between the genuine representatives of peoples freely and democratically elected to their parliaments. We encourage

initiatives to establish a consultative forum among the parliamentarians of the countries of South-Eastern Europe.

We reiterate our common opinion that enhanced economic and trade relations between our nations would best contribute to better understanding and cooperation in our region, and stress our political will to strive for the removal of existing barriers prior to such cooperation.

We shall therefore intensify our efforts for increased economic cooperation, reform, enhancement of communications, energy and transport infrastructure, including the realization of the Pan-European corridors, development of new technologies and environmental protection, as well as promotion of favourable conditions for investments in the region.

We express our satisfaction on the arrangements for the establishment of the Regional Centre for Trade Promotion in the Balkans as a concrete step to promote regional economic cooperation.

Having reviewed the recent negative trends in the world economic situation, particularly in financial markets and stock exchanges, we acknowledge their undesirable effects on the countries of South-Eastern Europe, in particular on economies in transition. We believe that there is still more to be gained from globalization and that protectionist measures should be avoided.

In this vein, we welcome the bilateral free-trade agreements which have already been signed or are being negotiated among the countries of the region. We agreed to continue this process with a view to gradually creating the conditions for the establishment of a free-trade zone compatible with the international commitments of our countries.

We took note of the deliberations of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs at Istanbul on 8 and 9 June 1998 with respect to enhancing political cooperation. We welcomed their tasking of the Political Directors to initiate a study for the development of a Charter of Good-Neighbourly Relations in South-Eastern Europe. We also welcomed the draft proposal submitted by Turkey to the Antalya Summit and invite the Foreign Ministers to deploy every effort with a view to finalizing work on this document before the end of 1999.

We consider that the Charter should be based on the universally recognized principles to which we are all committed, areas and modalities of cooperation in the fields elaborated in the declarations of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs as well as an appropriate institutional framework to implement cooperation in those fields.

We express our warm thanks for the hospitality of Turkey for hosting the Antalya Summit Meeting.

The next meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the Countries of South-Eastern Europe will take place in Romania in 1999.

Antalya, 13 October 1998